

RNC RESEARCH DIVISION
MAY 22, 1972

SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

VIETNAM

HAWK

Ted Kennedy Touring Vietnam

Saigon (Reuters) - Sen. Edward Kennedy arrived in Saigon Saturday from Washington for a five-day visit to South Vietnam with another Democratic senator, Joseph Tydings of Maryland.

The late president's youngest brother said it would be a "great mistake" to think the current protests and demonstrations in the U.S. against American involvement in the Viet Nam war reflected the prevailing view.

"I do feel the overwhelming majority of the American people are behind the policies of President Johnson's Viet Nam," Kennedy said.

Boston Globe
October 24, 1965

Ted Begins Tour - Defends Viet Nam War By Martin F. Nolan

Lowell - Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, beginning a speaking schedule heavily weighted towards youth groups, reaffirmed support for America's Viet Nam policy here Monday.

In a speech to more than 1,500 students at Lowell Technological Institute, he discussed what he called "the fundamental moral question facing the U.S."

"That question is this," Kennedy said. "Are we to say to the 17 million people of South Viet Nam that because you have not been able to establish a national identity that you are going to be taken over by a strong aggressive force?"

"Because you are still struggling, are we going to let you go down the drain, so to speak?"

"Are we concerned at all about people in a far and distant land? Do we want to defend freedom? We do, because this is our commitment, our heritage, our destiny...."

Kennedy, who returned last week from a three-week tour of Asia, laid special emphasis on civilian programs in South Viet Nam and criticized a lack of American emphasis on civilian action programs there.

"It will be a hollow victory indeed," he said, "if we win militarily and do not have a civic action program. The loss of American lives would be in vain. An American working at animal husbandry with the people is just as important as the American who carries an AR-15 rifle."

"Very often," he declared, "an officer will be on civic action for two days, then on patrol for 10 [sic] days. Then too, the officer is transferred back to the United States and his experiences is not passed along."

Otherwise, Kennedy's message echoed that of the Johnson Administration that "those 17 million people should have the right of self-determination."

The senator criticized "those so quick to condemn the United States for military action."

"I wish they had raised their voices against Viet Cong terrorism," he said, "against Viet Cong murder, kidnapping and political assassination."

"A young American officer told me that he saw two Viet Cong soldiers chained to a machine gun. That's not a characteristic of a national liberation front."

Boston Globe
November 16, 1965

Importance of U.S. Commitment

"If Viet Nam falls to the Communists, then the rest of Southeast Asia goes with it. We've got to assume our responsibility in this world and insure that this doesn't happen."

Holyoke (Mass) Transcript
December 16, 1965

"I would like to tell you what my position is on Vietnam, Mrs. Dickerson. I support our fundamental commitment in Vietnam. I realize, as all Americans do, that we have some 235,000 American fighting men who are there to see that this commitment is fulfilled. I support our commitment. It was made some time ago, but I believe it is fundamental and it is sound. I believe that we have to utilize every resource in our power whether it is military or diplomatic to see that this commitment is fulfilled."

Meet the Press
March 6, 1966

DOVE

General

"For we are in a war difficult to justify, impossible to win. A war not worthy of our lives and efforts, a conflict that has made us ill as a people, as surely as any disease that attacks the body.

"Years ago, Walter Lippman said that we could not build a great society here at home, if we had to fight a land war in Asia. Now we know how right he was. Today ten months after we ended the futile bombing of North Vietnam, 16 months after peace negotiations began, we still have half a million men, countless billions of dollars, and many of our hopes for a better America bogged down in Vietnam. The unity and the spirit of our nation have been affected by this war, and they cannot be renewed until the burden of war is lifted.

"For three-quarters of this year, the American people have waited hopefully for new policies designed to end this costly and futile war. Now the answer to those expectations is becoming painfully clear. The war will continue. The immense toll of death and suffering will continue to mount. Poverty at home will go on. Prices will rise, and the economy will continue to weaken under the strain of a war rejected by the great majority of the American people. We can expect more division, even violence, between our people as the war works its corrupting effect on every aspect of national life."

"In Saigon a corrupt and repressive government has refused to allow the many non-Communist forces of South Vietnam that seek peace to share in power. The recent change in the Saigon cabinet only further narrowed that regime, and helped to illuminate its complete failure to win the respect or allegiance of the people whose self-determination we are supposed to be protecting. While at Paris there has been no movement at all. And for very good reasons. We have refused to consider compromise on the real issue in dispute -- who shall join in governing South Vietnam during an election. That, after all, is what this war is all about. For more than half a decade the Viet Cong and the Vietnamese of the North have battled the South Vietnamese Army and the United States only for the answer to that question: Who shall join in governing South Vietnam. If we refuse to compromise on this issue, we are asking them to accept defeat. And we have not defeated them. Moreover we cannot defeat them. This crucial and overwhelming fact has been asserted by almost every leading critic of the war -- by Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy, by George McGovern and William Fulbright and by hundreds of others. Yet the lesson is still ignored. It is still ignored as we pursue the shadows of hopes long gone. And no talk of concessions, no hints of compromise, can cover up the fact that we have not been willing to consider the continued control of the Thieu regime as a negotiable question: and that as long as we remain unmoved on this issue there can be no peaceful solution.

"General Thieu has said he will not accept such a compromise. But why should General Thieu control the destiny of America, or dictate the future of young American lives. We cannot allow a General in South Vietnam to coerce the United States into continuing a major war. It is time to say to the Saigon government: If you will not agree to a sensible compromise -- even if it endangers your personal power -- then it is your war and you must fight it alone.

"The tragedy of all this is that we could have moved swiftly to end this war and the people of this country would have applauded the coming of peace. Instead, we have chosen to repeat the mistakes of the past. The Vietnam policy of today is the discredited policy of the past -- we will simply continue the war in the hope, in the endless hope, that something will happen to bring it to an end. This is not a policy of peace -- it will not end the war -- it will not stop the killing." (Emphasis added)

Speech -- at a testimonial dinner
for Dr. Sidney Farber
Boston, Massachusetts
September 18, 1969

"We talk with greater frankness now about Vietnam. The harshness of the real world has finally overtaken us. Finally there is light at the end of the tunnel -- but it is not the pleasant glow of victory. It is the glare of difficult compromise. For a time criticism of our Vietnam policy was stilled as we waited for a new President to carry out the promises he made and the mandate he received. And the President has taken action. He has clearly stated that he wishes peace and the extrication of America from the war. No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-242-6-3-3-american

troops. Recent U.S. casualty figures are the lowest in three years -- following the issuance of new orders to our field commanders.

"Yet impatience grows across the country. For we detect in our government more improvisation than policy, more steps taken in reaction to pressures than out of leadership. The final question of political compromise remains: Are we willing as a nation to accept the fact that the ultimate solution to Vietnam will require the presence of unfriendly elements in the future government of South Vietnam -- a solution not totally satisfactory to us? Are we willing as a nation to accept the fact that whatever the future government of the South, it will not be the present government, nor will it be totally free of participation by members of the National Liberation Front. If we are not willing to respond on this issue today the alternative, clear and horrible, is simply to fight on -- with more bloodshed, more deaths, more war. For the cold fact is -- we have not defeated the enemy in Vietnam nor will we. We are not in a position then to impose the form of government we wish. The matter must be decided by the competing political interests in South Vietnam. But no political change can effectively take place as long as the might of the United States stands between the current regime and those other nationalistic groups that would compete with it." (Emphasis added)

Speech -- before the World
Affairs Council
Boston, Massachusetts
October 15, 1969

"I stand for peace. For better or worse my opposition to the continuation of war in Southeast Asia is full and unqualified. Too many have died for too insignificant a cause, both abroad and at home, for me to equivocate before the people on this matter. I have spoken on the war before. I shall speak on it again, and again. I am prepared to be tested before the voters for this."

Acceptance Speech at the
Massachusetts Democratic Convention
June 12, 1970

"I'm opposed to our involvement in Southeast Asia. I think we should get out of Southeast Asia, lock, stock and barrel."

Washington Post
September 21, 1970

"First we must end the war. My opposition to the continuation of the war in Vietnam is full and unqualified. And the path out of Vietnam does not lead through Cambodia and Laos. Nor can a nation that prides itself on its compassion for others find satisfaction in a policy that incorporates massive and indiscriminate aerial warfare. Too many have died. Too many from Massachusetts. Too many from South Carolina. Too many of our young men and too many of theirs. Too many children and too many aged. The time to end the war is now."

Speech -- before the Junior Chamber
of Commerce State Convention in
Charleston, South Carolina
February 27, 1971

"The President came to office pledging to end the slaughter -- and today 4,000 more Americans are dead.

"The President invokes his Quaker heritage -- and today, we indiscriminately bomb innocent Asian people.

"The President came to office with the reputation of a conscientious man-- and today the advice of old-- that 'a conscientious man would be cautious how he dealt in blood'-- goes forgotten and ignored."

"The President offers only two rationales against setting a date today to end the war. He tells us that to do so will jeopardize the prisoners, and will jeopardize the so-called 'reasonable chance of survival' he wants to leave South Vietnam.

"Again and again, we have seen that these rationales are sterile. We know that the Government of South Vietnam must stand or fall on its record of the past and its promises for the future for the people of Vietnam -- not on any supposed assistance by a residual force of American troops and bombs. The survival the President is talking about is not the survival of South Vietnam itself, but the survival of President Thieu and his government in Saigon."

Speech, National Convocation
of Lawyers to End the War
Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1971

MISS DREW: "...Now, if you were in charge today or tomorrow how would you end this war?"

SENATOR KENNEDY: "I'd do it in the -- General Shoup and others have talked about a matter of days being able to withdraw. I'm not sure that it could be in days, but I think that a time definitely could be in weeks. I support the McGovern-Hatfield that sets December 31st, which is some six and a half months off. I think half that time would be sufficient. I think the next action that you'd see is that the other side, the North Vietnamese, would involve themselves in discussion about the release of prisoners. We've seen before the agreements made, whether it was in terms of bombing halts with President Johnson. We've seen the other side make agreements in terms of French involvement in 1954. There is no reason to believe that they won't do it. They have indicated quite to the contrary that they would.

① "I think that's the best way to free the prisoners. And I think what's more important perhaps -- well, nothing is more important than ending the war and freeing the prisoners, but it -- American prisoners--but we want to terminate the violence in that country. I don't think our obligations are satisfied when we see the return of American prisoners, when we get the last American. We have responsibility to terminate the violence.

"And with a time definite -- what that says to the political forces in South Vietnam is that they're going to have to make adjustments and accommodations with other groups that heretofore they've refused to do.

"So you're going to get the various political parties and forces. It'll be underneath the ground. It'll be in the quiet rooms and out in the country-side, but you'll get political activity the likes of which you've never seen out there because they're going to have to in order to survive. And this is really, I think, the best way to reach political solutions to it."

"Thirty Minutes With...",
WETA-TV, Channel 26
Washington, D.C.
June 8, 1971

"All Americans that meet tonight here in this great hall or in their homes or communities around this country, have to realize that first issue that is before us is ending the war in Southeast Asia. We know that there are hundreds of Americans who still exist in prison camps in a far and distant land. We know that no matter how we can applaud the reduction of troop involvement in Southeast Asia, no matter how we're greatly satisfied with the reduction in the number of American casualties, that still as long as violence continues, as long as there are hundreds of Americans in communist prison camps, that we cannot be satisfied, that we must be restless. We must search and seek a policy which will insure that these Americans who are serving, not only in the Armed Forces of our country in Southeast Asia, but are in the prisons of the North are going to be returned to the United States. Returned to their families, returned to their communities.

"One of the most distressing facts for me and I think for all Americans is that there is an offer at the Paris peace talk table to return the United States' prisoners of war if we are to set a time definite for the withdrawal of American troops. I for one believe that this still remains as the number one issue for our country and for our nation. We must see the withdrawal of American troops not on President Thieu's schedule for his interests are quite different from those of the United States, not really on President Nixon's schedule, but on a schedule which is on the best interests of the halting of violence and destruction in that part of the world and the speedy return of all Americans from that far and distant and troubled land."

Speech, Testimonial Dinner in
honor of South Dakota Lieutenant
Governor William Dougherty
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
November 5, 1971

"The first and most important issue, the one that leads all the rest is the issue of the war. It may be true that Vietnam is not so desperate a problem now as it was three years ago. Our involvement on the ground has been reduced. Troops are coming home. And this is an enormous improvement over the policies of prior years. But the war has also been extended into Laos and Cambodia, and now, perhaps, to Thailand. No one thinks that the bombing is winding down.

"These foreboding signs illuminate the paradoxes of our policy. We are withdrawing, but not completely. The South Vietnamese are supposed to defend themselves, but American forces must stay on to help. The war is largely on the ground, but our ultimate answer is still from the air.

"If ever a President was elected to end a war, to wash away the stain brought on us by Vietnam, Richard Nixon was elected for that purpose. With far less outcry in the nation at the time, President Eisenhower vowed to end the Korean War in the campaign of 1952, and by 1954, America was at peace.

"Now, four years have passed since 1968. Twenty thousand more Americans have died, and still the war goes on. We know that the monstrous bombing will continue. And we know that thousands of soldiers of North and South Vietnam, and tens of thousands of innocent men and women and children, will die in Indochina in 1972, for the simple reason that President Nixon will not allow the Saigon Government to falter until he is secure at home for another term of office.

"I believe there is no more to the discussion of Vietnam than that...

"Let us end completely every aspect of our military involvement in Vietnam, once and for all. Let us abandon every one of the false dreams that led us into that swamp. Let us admit that as all men make mistakes, so do nations, and that we are large and courageous enough to disdain false pride, repair our errors, and seek the path of decency once again."

Speech, Washington Press Club
Washington, D.C.
January 17, 1972

"The President would like us to believe the war is winding down. The troops are coming home, he says. The bodies are no longer American. But how long will our prisoners rot in Hanoi? Does anyone in this room -- does anyone in America -- seriously believe that North Vietnam will ever release our prisoners until we stop the bombing, until we stop killing of innocent men and women and children in Indochina, until we stop destroying their homes and schools and churches and temples and hospitals and farms and marketplaces?

* * *

"Nothing can conceal the Administration's most serious failure of the past four years, the failure to end the war. America voted in 1968 to end the war, and if we have to vote again to end the war in 1972, it will not be Richard Nixon who ends the war. Why doesn't he follow the example of President Eisenhower, who ended the Korean war less than two years after he took office, who led us through World War II in less time than it is taking President Nixon to get us out of Indochina?

"....President Nixon has failed the Eisenhower legacy, and he has failed the American people. We thought we had a promise, and that was in 1968. The American people want the war to stop. They want to bring our men home from Vietnam now -- not on President Thieu's schedule, not on President Nixon's schedule, but now."

Speech, California State Democratic
Party Sustaining Fund Dinner
Los Angeles, California
February 19, 1972

"Asked about President Nixon's renewal of the 'domino theory' --- the argument that if Vietnam goes, so does the rest of Southeast Asia --- Kennedy said, 'Goes where? Goes where?'" (See earlier hawkish statements)

Milwaukee Journal
May 7, 1972

Cambodia and Laos

In the preface to a report prepared by the staff of his Senate judiciary subcommittee on refugees, Kennedy said:

"With the spreading of war into Cambodia, fear has now gripped almost the entire population of Indochina, vastly increasing human misery, the flow of refugees, and the occurrence of civilian war casualties."

* * *

"A business-as-usual attitude continues to pervade much of our view of what needs to be done, and a false sense of optimism pervades much of our view of what has been done."

"It is a regrettable fact that the problems of the people are as overwhelming today as they have been in the past and in some ways even more so."

Washington Star
September 27, 1970

"For a gross step was taken in the invasion of Laos, and unlike times past, the people of this nation have uttered hardly a word of protest. No trains are coming from New York now filled with the finest legal minds. No law schools have prepared their briefs on the Constitutionality of it all. My mail room is not flooded with telegrams; no Senate Committees are meeting in public.

Rather, we read in the weekly magazines that America is cooling off, that we are entering a period where each person will be more interested in literally doing his own thing and less interested in the larger events that do not seem to submit to control."

Speech -- to the Businessmen's
Executive Movement for Peace in
Vietnam
February 17, 1971

"Never has the Administration's credibility on the war been more in doubt than in the aftermath of the tragic experience in Laos.

"Our vision of the Laos operation is a nightmare. It was conceived under a senseless news embargo that fooled no one but ourselves. It was carried out in flagrant violation of the spirit of legislation passed by Congress. Now, it has ended in what can only be called humiliating retreat, and the more clearly so because the retreat is so clearly premature and so obviously in panic.

"The conflicting claims of victory may never be fully resolved. But for the millions of American people, the vision of the Laos operation is scores of American helicopters shot down, the highest American casualty rates in many weeks, and American combat troops refusing a command to engage the enemy. Above all, the vision is of South Vietnamese soldiers in headlong flight, desperately clawing for room on the skids of the American helicopters that could carry them to safety, while American airmen just as desperately push them back to ~~wait~~ to wait for the next uncertain and overloaded plane. America is coming out of Laos on the skids. The cause of peace has suffered another blow, because once again we have let ourselves pursue the phantom of military victory. Not since the darkest days of the TET offensive has an American military operation appeared so futile.

"The same sort of criticism can and must be made against every other aspect of the war. No nation that prides itself on its compassion and humanity can possibly justify our cruel and inhuman policy of massive aerial warfare, free-fire zones, and indiscriminate bombing of innocent towns and villages.

"The President says the South Vietnamese can 'hack it,' but no one asks how many Laotian people have been killed by the tons of bombs and rockets we have poured into that unhappy land. It will be months before we know. Slowly, the reports will drift in of villagers killed and wounded."

Speech, State Democratic Chairmen's
Association
Washington, D.C.
March 25, 1971

"The massive but brief outpouring of participation at the time of the Cambodian invasion earned no one a permanent ticket as a spectator thereafter. Moreover, I think you underrate your own impact if you think you failed in that encounter. Of course, you did not achieve passage of the End-the-War Amendment. That was a goal worth striving towards, but you all knew it was unlikely to be achieved in a few weeks or months.

"Yet you did, after all, secure a termination date for participation of American troops in the Cambodian adventure; you did keep American troops out of Laos. You also forced the President to dilute the rhetoric of war and much of the inflammatory jingoism that goes with it. And beyond that, in those few weeks in May of 1970, for the first time you broke through the barrier that separates many Congressmen from the people: you made them sit down face to face and listen to you; you changed a few minds, but more importantly you changed the rules of the game, and made citizen lobbying on vital issues a more viable, more effective tool.

"Yet, despite these accomplishments, the war in Indochina remains a monstrous outrage. The real effects of the partial American withdrawal are far from enough to justify anyone's silence. One-third of those killed in Vietnam have been killed since a man came to the White House who said he had a plan to end the war. In fact, we have only changed the color of the bodies in Indochina as we 'widen down' the war. The total of U.S. and South Vietnamese military men killed in each of the first two quarters of 1971 was still higher than in any quarter before the TET offensive. Still bombs fall on villages; still their inhabitants become homeless refugees; still the toll of civilian casualties mounts in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

"And our policy continues to be based on the same kind of double - think that characterized our escalation and the Cambodian invasion. This Sunday will bring the charade of the Vietnamese presidential 'election.' Securing the right of the Vietnamese people to have a free choice of government is what keeps us there, we have been told. Now that it is clear that the existing government will frustrate that goal, we are told we must stay to protect the present government from being ousted. Thus the choice seems to be between giving up our goal and maintaining our presence, or giving up our presence and perhaps obtaining our goal. Faced with this choice, the President will undoubtedly choose presence over principle, so the war goes on."

Speech, Harvard Law School Forum
Cambridge, Massachusetts
September 27, 1971

Coalition Government

"There will be no peace, there will be no end to killing, until the conclusion, first stated by a man who died three years ago this week -- the concept of a coalition government -- is met and understood. In those days, that conclusion was ridiculed as placing the fox in the chicken coop. The ridicule was unjust. But today the concept of a coalition government is called 'defeat.' And this is hypocrisy. Have we progressed or are we walking backwards?"

Speech, National Convocation of
Lawyers to End the War
Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1971

"I think we, as Robert Kennedy said, well, five years ago, you're going to have to recognize that there's going to be an apolitical accommodation which is going to have to include the elements of the NLF."

MISS DREW: "I'm not talking about including. I'm talking about perhaps them having a dominant position."

SENATOR KENNEDY: "Who's suggesting -- those are matters of -- that can be adjusted and worked out. We're not imposing that nor do they have to be imposed. But what you're going to do is you're going to create a condition in which those elements will be able to work themselves out. You're going to say to Thieu and Ky, 'you're not going to be able to rely on us.' Now, they can make a decision. And they'll say, 'Well, we're going to have to therefore negotiate with X and Y because he's got power. The Hoa Hao's and the Cao Dai's and the other different elements which were in the society because we know we can't rely on our principal crutch which is the United States.' As long as they know they can rely on us then what reason -- as long -- what reason have they got to actually enter into negotiation? I don't see the forces that are there that would be there if we announced the time definite."

Interview, "Thirty Minutes With...",
WETA-TV, Channel 26
Washington, D.C.
June 8, 1971

Communist Offensive - 1972

"Does anyone seriously believe that the Government of South Vietnam could survive this new offensive on its own, without support of massive American air power? If that is what Vietnamization really means, then the Administration has misled the American people with its promise to end the war, and the policy of Vietnamization is revealed as just a cruel and murderous hoax on the people of Indochina, bringing them more of the same death and destruction that President Nixon promised years ago to end. The only promise we really see at all is not a promise to end the war, but a promise of war without end.

"I yield to no one in my condemnation of the new offensive by North Vietnam, but I do not believe that the Administration can escape its very real share of the responsibility for the present crisis...No, there is blame enough for all sides in Vietnam. Indeed, history may well record that our boycott of the Paris peace talks last month was the final shock that drove North Vietnam to mount this new offensive. We know that this offensive has been rumored for many months. We engaged in massive bombing raids last Christmas, supposedly to forestall it. When the President traveled to Peking, we again resumed the bombing, so that no untoward offensive would embarrass that historic trip."

Statement,
April 12, 1972

Hamburger Hill

"President Nixon has told us, without question, that we seek no military victory, that we seek only peace. How then can we justify sending our boys against a hill a dozen times or more, until soldiers themselves question the madness of the action? The assault on 'Hamburger Hill' is only symptomatic of a mentality and a policy that requires immediate attention. American boys are too valuable to be sacrificed for a false sense of military pride."

Kennedy Administration

MISS DREW: "You know, there has been a question about what your brother, the President, President Kennedy, might have done in Vietnam. What do you think?"

SENATOR KENNEDY: "I wouldn't speculate."

MISS DREW: "You wouldn't speculate."

SENATOR KENNEDY: "I think that -- of course, there was some build-up. We had close to -- in excess of 14,000 troops. The total loss of life at the time was 137 men. That was a dramatically different involvement than the introduction of combat troops, the escalation of the bombing or even where we are today. And I think the complexion of the involvement -- of course, this changed very dramatically. But I don't think it serves any useful purpose to look back in terms of trying to speculate. I don't think that's really fair.

"I can remember one time when President Kennedy out to receive the nomination asked someone to work out sort of a detailed program in terms of what would happen as of election day to the time that he would be sworn in -- to work out a detailed plan in case he was elected because he knew very well that no one would be thinking about that during the course of a political campaign, and suddenly he might end up being the nominee and not know really what he'd do. He'd been gearing up in terms of the campaign but not in terms of assuming the responsibility.

"So a very detailed plan was worked out for that transition period, and the fellow that came in to after --- I remember being down in Cape Cod to talk to the President, and he said, 'Well, you have to remember one thing,' he said, 'as you go in, that a high school senior from a high school in any part of this country is going to have a better judgment looking backwards than the most brilliant of your advisors are going to have looking forward.' And I think when you say, 'What would he have done?' it's so easy to think of the mistakes that have been made, but so difficult at that time and in fairness to the people that were making decisions to look perspective."

Interview, "Thirty Minutes With...",
WETA-TV, Channel 26
Washington, D.C.
June 8, 1971

McGovern-Hatfield Amendment

"And so, as we join in earnest for the McGovern-Hatfield amendment this week and beyond, we must keep the great issue of the war at the center of the debate. We cannot be fooled by the false arguments of those who say the war must go on.

"We must recite again the terrible effects of the war on the people of American and Indochina. We must recite the lives lost and the homes destroyed in Asia. We must recite the anguish of the prisoners and their families. We must recite the bitter divisions of our people here at home, the disaffection of our youth. We must recite the deceptions of our government and the undermining of our Constitution. We must recite the billions of dollars wasted that we could have used to build a better America and a better world. And, we must recite the missed opportunities on the great issues here at home, like race, and health, and education;

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and all the great issues abroad, like SALT and NATO and Berlin, and Africa and Israel and Latin America.

"And, most difficult of all, we must destroy the cancer that has been transforming the noble spirit of our nation in the eyes of our own citizens and in the eyes of freedom-loving people throughout the world. We must spread the truth that our present policy is a policy of war, not of peace; a policy of violence, not of love; a policy of despair, not of hope -- a policy that can only drag us further down into the abyss of death and immorality into which we have been descending for so long.

"All these things you must tell to every one of us in Congress and to every office of government, until at last you make us understand, until at last you make us act to end the war.

"And once these truths are known, I am confident that Congress will see the road it has to take. We will embrace our basic constitutional power and responsibility, and we will legislate December 31 as the date to end the war.

"The brutalities we have committed in Vietnam in the name of America's national interest will remain forever in the history of the war. And some day, when the war is over, and its horror is no longer a headline but a memory, they will ask us how it ended. And let us at least be able to say, it ended because Congress at last awakened, and the Constitution began to function, and America found its way.

"The Executive Branch has faltered, paralyzed by the prospect of peace."

Speech, National Convocation of
Lawyers to End the War
Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1971

Mining of North Vietnamese Ports

"Senator Edward M. Kennedy,...,called the mining of Haiphong harbor 'a futile military gesture that demonstrates the desperation of the President's Indochina policy. I think his decision is ominous, and I think it is folly.'"

Associated Press
May 9, 1972

Mylai

"Mylai and the Calley trial are but the latest episodes in the fundamental immorality of the war. This is where the military myths have led us. Lieutenant Calley is a tragic figure, and the only hopeful sign I see is that the national indignation over the outcome of the trial is a cry from the heart of millions of Americans who suddenly now see the awful immorality of the war. If we view Calley and Mylai as a symptom of a system gone astray, if we dedicate ourselves to setting it straight again, if it helps us end the war, then this tragic moment in our history may someday, somehow, be requited, and the innocent victims -- the men, women, and children of Mylai -- will not have died in vain."

Address, Conference on Economic
Communist

Negotiations, Peace Talks, Peace Offers

"The President's address to the nation is less a new initiative than it is a confession of failure. Virtually everything the President said last night could have been said months or years ago.

"The only difference is that in recent months, while the killing has gone on without remission, we have been pursuing a path of secret negotiations that have now been proved a failure.

"The plan we have heard last night from the President is not a plan to end the war. In spite of the years of constant promises he has made, it is clear that he is not yet prepared to make the only sort of offer that can end the killing in Vietnam.

⑨ "We do not need an eight-point plan to end the war. All we need is a one point plan --- a complete withdrawal of American ground, sea, and air forces, by a date certain, in exchange for a return of our prisoners.

"So long as we try to condition our withdrawal on things like free elections, a cease fire, or any of the other trappings disclosed last night, reasonable as they seem, we shall be pursuing the same blind alley in public negotiations that we have followed with such futility in private.

"When will we learn that America cannot and should not attempt to dictate the terms of the political settlement in South Vietnam? If we have not been able to achieve that settlement with the expenditure of ten years of effort and the blood of 50,000 American lives, we will not be able to do it now or in the future.

"Let us recognize the clear reality of the war. Let us recognize that the time has come for a total end to American involvement in Vietnam. Let us recognize that the only condition we can reasonably attach to America's complete withdrawal is the return of America's prisoners. That is the only way we shall ever establish the generation of peace which the President wants and which is always in our deepest prayers."

Statement
January 26, 1972

"No amount of talk can conceal the fact that the President's secret negotiations are a failure because the only peace offer the Administration is willing to lay on the conference table in Paris is a proposal to guarantee the survival of President Thieu in office. The President says we will never surrender to the enemy. No one is asking him to do that, and that is not the issue. The only issue is the peace offer, and it is an issue because the only offer the President ever makes is an ultimatum that demands surrender by the Viet Cong to the Government of South Vietnam. That's the same old one-sided secret peace offer which the enemy rejected seven years ago when President Johnson first tried it in 1965, and which the enemy has consistently rejected ever since."

Speech, California State Democratic
Party Sustaining Fund Dinner
Los Angeles, California
February 19, 1972

"Nothing more brutally demonstrates the moral and military bankruptcy of the President's policy on Vietnam than the horror of the new offensive at the DMZ. The decision to send in our bombers to rain down massive new death and destruction on the people of Vietnam is a clear confession, if any new confession were needed, that the cruel and revolting policy of Vietnamization is a failure, a bald pretext to keep President Thieu in power...

"...we must end the war, and the only way we can end it is through negotiations, not Vietnamization.

"It is no coincidence that the escalation of the war in the battlefield is being accompanied by our boycott of the peace table in Paris...Just as our policy on the battlefield has been a failure, so our policy in Paris is a failure.

"By breaking off the peace talks, we broke off any hope for peace. We delivered a clear invitation to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese to escalate the violence. Perhaps we shall never know whether this long anticipated new offensive would have materialized had we chosen to stay at the peace table last month. The President claims that he is keeping all his options open, but he seems to have forgotten how he so recently foreclosed the most important option of all, the option of peace at the conference table, the only place where peace will ever be achieved...

"To me, the policy we ought to have is a simple one. Let us have a test of negotiations, not a test of Vietnamization. Let us go back to the peace table in Paris. Let us make a genuine effort to end the killing now.

"I call on the President to demonstrate to the American people that he wants peace. I urge him, now, publicly, to call for an immediate ceasefire in the DMZ. I urge him to announce that America is going back to the peace table in Paris tomorrow, to seek an immediate end to the war. Let us discuss the plans already on the table. Let us develop new plans. Let us explore every possible avenue. But above all, let us stop this insane new round of killing, and end this unconscionable and interminable war."

Statement
April 5, 1972

"My outrage over the present murderous offensive in Vietnam is matched only by my outrage over the cruel senseless view at large in the nation today that the proper present policy for the United States is to let the slaughter proceed. How can this nation possibly wash its hands of the blood that is being shed today in North and South Vietnam?

"...The reason for the current impasse in Paris is clear. The talks have broken down because neither side is willing to make any substantial compromise for the purpose of securing peace. President Nixon insists that we will never surrender to the enemy, and the enemy insists that they will never surrender to Saigon. But that is simply posturing for domestic political gain. No one is asking for surrender by either side...

"What is asked by those of us who oppose this war is a genuine attempt at compromise -- a compromise fairly reflecting the central years-old fact that the war is a stalemate on the battlefield, and that the best hope for peace in the foreseeable future is a settlement at the conference table."

Statement
April 7, 1972

"Instead of attending the session, instead of ending the American boycott [of the Paris peace talks], instead of making every possible effort to stop the killing, all the administration does is set up the crude smokescreen of a secret initiative, with the result that Ambassador Porter and the administration's spokesman in Paris are engaged today in a devious and unseemly charade over whether or not the Vietcong received a private invitation to resume the talks."

Congressional Record
April 13, 1972

Prisoners

"The deceptions surrounding the issue of the prisoners are especially cruel because we know the fresh suffering endured by their families and themselves each day the war is prolonged. Tragically, the prisoners have become pawns in the master political plan of President Nixon. The North Vietnamese have already made a clear and continuing offer to discuss the issue of the prisoners as soon as the United States has set a date to end the war. But that offer to negotiate has been rejected out of hand by the Administration. Instead, our policy is to demand more from North Vietnam than just an 'offer to discuss.' We want, the Administration says, a firm commitment by North Vietnam to release the prisoners, in return for any basic concession on the part of the United States to end the war..."

"Surely, given the rate of troop withdrawals and the obvious political necessity that the withdrawals should continue, a residual force of American troops remaining in Vietnam will have no relevance whatever to our ability to release the prisoners. All that is sure to happen is that more soldiers and civilians will die, more prisoners will be taken, and more families will be broken, while the debate over the prisoners is prolonged."

Speech, National Convocation of
Lawyers to End the War
Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1971

"If necessary, he [Kennedy] said, he would have 'crawled into the room' if it meant getting the POWs back. 'What are we going to do,' he said, 'just stand behind the flag and let them rot?'"

United Press International
September 28, 1971

"President Nixon holds the key to release the prisoners in his hand, as surely as he held the key that released James Hoffa last December, and the sooner he unlocks the door the better."

Speech, Washington Press Club
Washington, D.C.,
January 17, 1972

Thieu Government

"Last week, a law was passed in South Vietnam that virtually bars all competition to President Thieu in this fall's election. America said nothing. America did nothing to oppose it. Yet, that is the government American soldiers are fighting and dying for. And the shame is overwhelming, for that's the kind of government American soldiers have always fought and died against."

Speech, National Convocation of Lawyers
to End the War
Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1971

When asked if he favored "continued aid to the Thieu government presuming he is re-elected in October after our withdrawal from Vietnam," Kennedy replied, "Do I favor continued aid? No, I don't."

Question and Answer Session
Congressional Bi-partisan
Intern Program
Washington, D.C.
July 7, 1971

"The regime of President Thieu is nothing but a minor trapping of American power, a regime that, when we leave Vietnam, will immediately wash away in the stench of its own inconsequence and incompetence and corruption. It is for this that Americans and Asians still die, for this that American bombs still ravage four small nations, for this that American prisoners still rot in Hanoi."

Speech, Washington Press Club
Washington, D.C.
January 17, 1972

Vietnamization

"In the past months, we have succeeded in unmasking the rhetoric and strategy behind Vietnamization, the policy that is President Nixon's own contribution to the war.

"Time and again, we have demonstrated that Vietnamization means only war and more war in Indochina, instead of an end to war .

"The argument for Vietnamization cannot stand the light of day. The only question that remains is how long the process itself can go on, now that its logic has been destroyed.

"At last, the ultimate and cynical reality of our policy in beginning to dawn on the American people. The only possible excuse for continuing the discredited policy of Vietnamizing the war, now and in the months ahead, seems to be the President's intention to play his last great card for peace at a time closer to November, 1972, when the chances will be greater that the action will benefit the coming presidential election campaign."

Speech, National Convocation of Lawyers
to End the War
Washington, D.C.
June 7, 1971